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MEDITATIE

Laat Uw Werk Blijken!

Laat Uw werk aan uwe knechten gezien worden, en Uwe heerlijkheid over hunne kinderen. En de liefelijkheid des Heeren, onzes Gods, zij over ons; en bevestig Gij het werk onzer handen over ons, ja, het werk onzer handen, bevestig, dat. Ps. 90:16, 17.

Uw werk, o God!

Laat dat gezien worden!

Want wij weten, dat Uw werk volmaakt is, en alleen in Uw volmaakt werk kan onze ziele rusten!

Wij gelooven, dat Uw werk de volmaakte ruste is, de eeuwige sabbat, het eeuwig genieten van het werk, dat zelf de rust is! Gij toch zijt de Eeuwige, bij Wien geen scheiding is tusschen werken en rusten, geen toeneming of afnemning, geen verandering of schaduw van omkeering. Gij werkt en wordt niet moede of mat! Gij rust en blijft toch de Werkende! Gij werkt en zijt de eeuwige Rustende. Onophoudelijk werkende rust Gij; en steeds rustend werkt Gij!

En ook zoo, o, groote, onzienlijke God, Gij Ondoorgrondelijke, en Onbegrepene, hebben we slechts van U iets gestameld. . . .

Hoe zal onze eindige tong Uw eeuwige grootheid roemen? Hoe zullen wij U loven naar de grootheid Uwer Heerlijkheid? Zal het eindige iets zeggen van den Oneindige, de tijd van den Eeuwige, het bestaan van den Zijnde, de verandering van den Onveranderlijke, nietig stof van den volmaakten Geest, het betrekkelijke van den Absolute, het schepsel van den Schepper, het gedragene van de eeuwige Armen, het moment van den Alpha en Omega, de duisternis van het Licht, de dood van het Leven?

En toch, o, God! Gij Zelf hebt ons geleerd van uwe grootheid en majesteit te stamelen!

En ofschoon wij U niet kunnen benaderen, veel minder bereiken; en ofschoon wij geen wetenschap van U hebben in onszelfen, van onszelfen, uit onszelfen, veel minder U ooit kunnen begrijpen; en ofschoon wij geen toegang onszelfen kunnen verschaffen tot Uw ontoegankelijk licht, veel minder daarin onze woning maken: toch kennen wij U, en verlustigt zich onze ziele in het staren in Uw eeuwige diepten; toch weidt onze ziele met een verwondrend oog daar, waar we Uwe liefelijkheid mogen aanschouwen; toch begeert ons hart altijd weer deze ééne zaak: dat we mogen wonen bij U! Want Gij hebt ons gekend in de diepten der eeuwigheid: daarom kennen wij U! Gij hebt ons uit 't niet opgetrokken tot in 't licht van Uw eigen beeld: daarom kan ons hart naar U uitgaan! Neen, Gij hebt ons uit diepten des doods getrokken tot in de hoogten des levens, uit de duisternis tot Uw wonderbaar licht: daarom keert zich onze ziele tot U, en dorst ons hart naar U, gelijk een hert dorst naar de waterstroomen. . . .

O, God! Uw werk. . . .

Laat het gezien worden aan Uwe knechten!

Laat het blijken, opdat we in dat werk van U ons mogen verlustigen en verblijden voor Uw aangezicht, ook nu, hier in den tijd, terwijl we nog op aarde verkeeren; ja, ook hier in deze wereld. . . .

Want wij zijn moe, o, God! van't zien van des menschen werk!

Rondom ons zien we het werk van den machtigen, maar ijdel, van U afgeweken en tegen U rebelleerenden Mensch. Hij zwoegt en hijgt, hij jaagt en heeft geen rust, hij graaft in de ingewanden der aarde, hij ploegt door de diepten der zee, hij vliegt door de hoogten der hemelen; hij vergadert zich schatten en wordt rijk, hij maakt zich een naam en wordt groot, hij verheft zich en wordt machtig; hij perst heel het zuchtend schepsel in zijnen dienst, en ook dat schepsel met al zijne krachten en vermogens hijgt en haast zich om zijnentwil: de aarde put zich uit om hem hare vrucht te bieden, de bliksem laat zich door hem binden, de ether draagt zijn stem naar de einden der wereld . . .

IJdelheid der ijdelheden!

En ook: dienst der zonde en des doods! Want hij vindt de ruste niet!

Hij haast zich en komt niet verder; hij zwoegt en raast en woedt, hij maakt moordwerktuigen en stort bloed, hij maakt het al minder en verwoest de aarde!

Oorlog op oorlog, en de verwoesting neemt al toe!

Nog klinkt na in onzen ooren 't rumoer van den laatsten oorlog. Vijf keer vijf malen voltooide de aarde haren jaarlijkschen rondgang sedert men vrede maakte. . . .

En thans staat letterlijk heel de schepping in dienst der verwoesting!

Maar, o, God! Uw werk is volmaakt!

Laat het gezien worden!

Ook nu!

Uw werk!

Uwe heerlijkheid!

De liefelijkheid des Heeren onzen Gods!

't Is in den grond der zaak al 't zelfde!

Want Uw werk is Uwe heerlijkheid, zooals wij die mogen aanschouwen en roemen. En Uw heerlijkheid is al schoonheid en liefelijkheid voor Uwe knechten.

Laat dan slechts Uw werk gezien worden aan Uwe knechten, o God onzes heils! Zoo zullen we Uwe heerlijkheid als Uw volk tot in duizenden geslachten roemen, en uwe liefelijkheid over ons aanschouwen en smaken, en belijden, dat Gij de eeuwig Goede zijt!

Zoo toch is Uw werk!

Het werk, dat bij U eeuwiglijk volmaakt is. Want bij U is de eeuwigheid en in Uwe eeuwigheid is de spelende Wijsheid, en in die spelende Wijsheid zijn alle dingen eeuwiglijk voor Uw aangezicht. Bij U is het begin en het einde, de alpha en de omega; en bij U wijst eeuwiglijk de alpha naar de omega heen; en bij U staat alles, wat daartusschen ligt in volmaakte harmonie, zich concentreerend om Uwe heerlijkheid, schitterend in 't licht van Uwe liefelijkheid. Zooals Gij de dingen ziet, o God! met een alles omvattend zien, zooals Gij de dingen kent, met een souverain kennen, zooals Gij de dingen wilt, met een onveranderlijk willen, zooals Gij de dingen hebt beschikt in Uw eeuwig welbehagen,—zoo, wij gelooven het, zijn ze volmaakt, zoo openbaren ze Uwe heerlijkheid, zoo storten ze overvloediglijk sprake uit van Uwe liefelijkheid!

Uw werk!

Uw werk, al Uw werk is immers één, omdat gij Eén zijt!

En wij gelooven, o, Heere! want wij gelooven Uw Woord, dat Gij zelf van dat ééne werk het Centrum zijt, en dat het alles schittert van Uwe heerlijkheid en van Uwe eeuwige liefelijkheid. Want Gij zijt God, en niemand meer. En Gij maakt alles om Uws Zelfs wil, ook den goddelooze tot den dag des kwaads. En dat

ééne groote werk, dat Gij doet, o, God! wij weten het, want Gij hebt het ons geopenbaard, is Uw huis, waarin Gij woont met allen, die Gij kent; woont, zooals Gij in Uzelven een wonend God zijt; Uw verbond, Uw eeuwig Verbond in hemelsche heerlijkheid, waarin alles tintelt van het volmaakte leven Uwer vriendschap, en waarin Gij eeuwiglijk tot ons zegt: Ammi! en wij in vreeze zonder vrees tot U zeggen: Eloï!

Want Gij zijt de Drieëenige!

In en bij Uzelven woont Gij, Drie in Eén, Eén door Drie!

Gij hebt in Uzelven alle oneindige volmaakheden, En Gij leeft het goddelijk vriendschapsleven van Uw eeuwig vreeverbond in Uzelven. Gij kent Uzelven, mint Uzelven, zoekt en vindt Uzelven, hebt gemeenschap in en met Uzelven Gij, aanbiddelijke Drie-in-Eén, Vader, Zoon, en Heilige Geest, de eenige en waarachtige God! En Gij hebt Uw Zoon verkoren tot Eerstgeborene aller creature, opdat Hij het Hoofd zou zijn van Uw Huis, Uw vreeverbond met ons, de Eerstgeborene onder vele broederen, en opdat Hij Uwen lof zou verkondigen in eene groote gemeente. En Gij hebt ook die gemeente verkoren, gekend in eeuwige liefde, als eene gemeente, die Gij uit diepten der zonde en des doods verlost en opheft tot in eeuwige hoogten van gerechtigheid en leven, en die daarom uit diepten van ellenden roept tot U, Die heil kunt zenden en ook zendt; eene gemeente, die Uwe heerlijkheid roemt, die Uwe heerlijkheid aanschouwt, die Uwe goedertierenheid smaakt, en die in Uw Huis woont, en met U leeft, zij het naar de mate van het schepsel, Uw eigen leven der vriendschap.

Wij gelooven, dat in Uw eeuwig welbehagen, in den raad Uws willens, dat werk eeuwig gereed is, en toch ook eeuwiglijk wordt gewerkt; dat Gij Uw Huis eeuwiglijk in volmaaktheid bewoont, maar toch eeuwiglijk bouwt, want bij Uw in de eeuwigheid zijn worden en zijn één. En wij gelooven, o, Heere! dat in Uw eeuwig en onveranderlijk voornemen, alle schepselen zich om de volmaaktheid van dat Huis concentreeren, medewerkend tot de voltooiing en heerlijkheid er van: stomme en redelijke schepselen, overheden en machten, engelen en duivelen, rechtvaardigen en goddeloozen; gerechtigheid en zonde, genade en toorn, zegen en vloek, leven en dood, vrede en oorlog.

Uw werk, o, God!

Uw aanbiddelijk, werk, o, Heere der heirscharen!

Laat het gezien worden aan Uwe knechten!

Want wij gelooven, dat Gij het worden van Uw Huis in den tijd bewerkt, om straks de volmaaktheid van Uw voltooid werk in eeuwige heerlijkheid te openbaren!

Gij werkt tot nu toe. . . .

En aldoor bouwt Gij Uw Huis!

Jaar in jaar uit, dag en nacht, uur na uur, elk moment van ons leven, van 's werlds ontwikkeling,

van heel de geschiedenis, werkt Gij. En alle schepsel, bewust of onbewust, gewilliglijk of tegen zijn wil, dient U onophoudelijk. En alles bouwt mede aan Uw eeuwig Huis!

Daarom weten we, dat alle dingen medewerken ten goede dengenen, die in Uw Huis zullen wonen.

En daarom verlangen we, o, Heere, om de grootheid en heerlijkheid en liefelikhied van Uw werk, over ons, en over onze kinderen, te aanschouwen.

Laat het gezien worden!

Veel werk van menschen, zien wij, o, Heere!

Tot moe-wordens toe!

Toon ons Uw werk!

Uw werk!

Maar hoe zullen wij het zien?

Hoe zult Gij thans, aan ons, Uwe knechten in de wereld, de volmaaktheid van Uw eeuwiglijk voltooid werk toonen?

Wij zijn kinderen des tijds. Wij brengen onze jaren door als eene gedachte. Aangaande de dagen onzer jaren, daarin zijn zeventig jaren, of, zoo wij zeer sterk zijn, tachtig jaren. . . . En wij vliegen daarhenen!

Want ook die zeventig of tachtig jaren zijn nimmer de onze. Wij behooren tot het oogenblik, tot het altijd voorbij vliegend oogenblik; wij zijn kinderen van het moment. Het verleden is niet meer; de toekomst is nog niet; en op dat ééne ondeelbare moment, waarin het niet meer zijnde verleden en de nog niet zijnde toekomst elkander raken, worden wij voortgedragen, snellijk, rusteloos. Nimmer staan we stil!

Hoe zullen wij dan Uw werk zien: hier en nu, o, God!?

Wij zien slechts momenten. Wat gisteren was, zien wij niet meer; wat morgen zal zijn, zien wij nog niet. Wij vliegen aan Uw werk voorbij gedragen als wij worden op den stroom des tijds. En bovendien is thans onze gezichtseinder zeer beperkt. Want in ons vliegend moment, en met ons aardisch oog en ons eindig verstand, zien wij niet de betrekking der dingen tot elkander, van de bijzonderheden van Uw werk tot het geheel, van het geheel tot het eeuwig en hemelsch einde.

En dan, o, God! Gij zijt een God, Die U verborgen houdt!

Gij wandelt door de diepten, waar wij U niet kunnen volgen, waar ons oog U niet kan naspeuren, waar Uw werk voor ons verborgen blijft. En hier liggen wij bovendien midden in den dood, en roepen wij altijd weer uit diepten der ellenden tot U, die heil kunt zenden. En in deze diepten zien wij soms niets dan eigen werk, en 't werk van booze menschen, en 't gewrocht van booze geesten: de machten der duisternis woeden

en hebben de overhand, en het schijnt alsof ze ook de overwinning zullen behalen. Het gaat den goddeloozen wel; de verwoesters der aarde, Uwe vijanden, o, God, hebben alle macht!

Uw werk, o, God! waar is het?

Maar toch, wij zien!

Want wij bezitten, en wij gelooven, o, onze God! Uw Woord!

En in Uw Woord hebt Gij 't werk, dat Gij de eeuwen door werkt, en dat Gij in 't verleden reeds gewrocht hebt, ons bekend gemaakt. Door Uw Woord laat Gij 't licht van Uw volmaakt werk opgaan over alle schijnbare verwarring van den tegenwoordigen tijd, over de duisternis van ons moment. En in dat licht zien wij het licht. In dat licht zien wij, ook nu, en door het geloof in Uw Woord, iets van Uw werk.

Want wij zien Jezus!

Wij zien Hem, als Uw werk, o, God en Vader van onzen Heere Jezus Christus! En als Uw werk zien we het wonder der vleeschwoording, zien we het diepe kruis, zien we Zijne heerlijke opstanding, zien we Zijne verhooging aan de rechterhand des Allerhoogsten!

Wij zien Jezus. . . met eer en heerlijkheid gekroond!

En in Hem zien wij de zekere voltooiing van Uw Huis!

Uw werk, o, Heere!

Geef, dat we door het geloof altijd en onder alle omstandigheden ook hier en nu, ook als Gij in donkerheden wandelt, Uw werk mogen zien, Uwe heerlijkheid over onze kinderen, Uwe liefelijkheid over ons mogen aanschouwen!

En laat dan ons werk aan Uw werk dienstbaar gesteld worden!

Opdat wij, Uw werk ziende door het geloof, Uwe medewerkers mogen zijn en steeds meer worden!

Werk Gij, o, God! ook door ons werk!

Opdat het bevestigd zij!

Kom, Heere Jezus!

Ja, kom haastelijk!

Want wij willen het werk Uws Vaders zien!

En ofschoon we hier wel door het geloof iets van dat werk mogen aanschouwen, wij kunnen niet rusten, eer we 't voltwoide werk Gods met onze oogen aanschouwen. En 't verlangen onzer ziele is niet bevredigd, eer we de heerlijkheid Gods over alle onze kinderen, vergaderd uit geslacht op geslacht, en de liefelijkheid des Heeren over Zijne knechten zien vervuld; en eer ook de wereld bekend, dat Gij ons liefgehad hebt. . . .

Uw werk, o, God! willen we zien!

Kom haastelijk!

H. H.

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EDITORIALS

Common Grace

3.

The true conception of the “moment” against the background of the counsel of God, makes it possible to give real meaning to history, according to Van Til. For, according to this view, it is God’s meaning that is in all things. They do not receive their meaning from man, for “God’s idea of Himself is *in re*”, and when man deals with “the phenomenal world” he deals with God. p. 8.

On this basis we can explain and maintain the reality of the “positive and negative instance”, good and evil, and especially moral good and moral evil. They are historically real and have meaning, exactly because they are viewed on the background of God’s eternal counsel, and because God controls all things. “It is because the reprobate is reprobated that his sin must be given and can be given as the reason for his lost estate. It is because the elect are elected that salvation is by faith alone. It is because of the ultimately ‘unconditional’ in God that the ‘conditional’ of history has meaning.” p. 10. In the light of God’s sovereign counsel we can also maintain the true correlativeness between the “positive and negative instance”, between good and evil. For God has freely determined that the evil should serve to bring out the good by contrast. “The probationary command in paradise was based on this principle. Those who were elected to eternal life, whose destiny was in God’s plan fully determined upon as being in the direction of the good, were yet threatened with eternal misery. Their moral act as a conditional act required the inclusion of this ‘threat’. On the other hand those who were not elected to eternal life, whose destiny was in God’s plan fully determined upon as being in the direction of evil, were yet placed before the conditional promise of eternal life. Their act of disobedience, to be real disobedience, required their confrontation with moral glory as the reward of moral virtue. The ‘threat’ of eternal punishment to the elect and the ‘promise of eternal life to the non-elect stand on the same epistemological level.” p. 10.

On this attitude of God and His dealing with “the elect” and “the reprobate” in Adam, Van Til has more to say in a later connection. Before we call attention to this, however, it is necessary to take cognizance of the distinction he introduces into the “Moment”. We will quote him literally. In order to understand his meaning the reader may take for

CONTENTS

	Page
MEDITATIE —	
LAAT UW WERK BLIJKEN!	145
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
EDITORIALS —	
COMMON GRACE	148
THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION	151
Rev. H. Hoeksema.	
THE NEW SEPARATION FROM THE HEATHENISM OF MIDIA	154
MARTYRDOM UNDER THE ROMAN EMPERORS	155
Rev. G. M. Ophoff.	
VERMOGENDE ALLE DINGEN	158
Rev. W. Verhil	
GOD’S JUDGMENTS AND WAR	160
Rev. H. Veldman	
CURRENT EVENTS	162
Rev. L. Doezeema	
LUTHER’S QUEST FOR JUSTIFICATION	163
Rev. J. A. Heys.	
LET’S PRESERVE BALANCE	165
Mr. B. Veldkamp	
INGEZONDEN	162
Mr. H. D. J.	

granted that by "moment" Van Til means all the events of history from the beginning to the consummation. He writes:

"But we have yet to reach the climax of our difficulties with respect to the possible significance of the Moment (history, H. H.). The Moment (history, H.H.) is really a series of Moments (related histories? H.H.). The Moment must be subdivided into *Moment A* and *Moment B*. Hence the Christian correlativity-idea (the idea that good and evil are so related, according to God's counsel, that evil, by contrast, serves to bring out the good, (H.H.) must be carried into this Moment-by-Moment relationship. Indeed, the correlativity-idea itself would be incomplete without this Moment-by-Moment relationship. And without the completion of the correlativity-idea the Moment (history, H.H.) would have no significance. Moment A without Moment B (history in the state of original righteousness in paradise, and history under sin and grace? H.H.) is incomplete. The *general* Moment (history, H.H.) includes both. The question then is as to the Moment by Moment relationship (ie. the relationship between Adam, the probationary command, the fall, on the one hand; Christ, election and reprobation, salvation and damnation, on the other hand? H.H.) And on this point there are, as is to be expected, only two answers. The Christian answer is based on the presupposition of the Christian necessity concept. God has determined by his free counsel on the eternal destiny both *in malum* (*malum*, of course, H.H.) and *in bonam partem* of all his moral creatures. (i.e. predestination unto eternal evil and eternal good, H.H.). Apparently without differentiation he places all these moral creatures before the probationary command. We say *apparently* without differentiation because it was not *really* without differentiation. More Moments (one could almost use the term "dispensations" here, H.H.) were to follow the probationary Moment (history, dispensation, H.H.). In particular one Moment, the Moment of the redemptive and reprobationary (is this a correct term? H.H.) work of Christ was to follow the probationary Moment. And the later Moment was to be related to the earlier Moment. Both were means to the final end as planned by God. Both Moments operate against the background of the basic universal of the counsel of God. They have significance in relationship to one another because of this general background of the counsel of God. Without this general background they would be utterly isolated and therefore have no meaning. The moral differential of the probationary command required the *later* Moment, a later Moment also operative before the counsel of God. Believers have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. The good works of believers were pre-

destined from before the Moment (history, H.H.) as such, and require not one but *two* important *Moments* for their realization. They are good works based on the historical rejection as well as on the historical acceptance of sin. The first Moment speaks of the historical acceptance; the second Moment of the historical rejection of evil. The one is incomplete without the other. In order to clarify the nature of the connecting link between Moment A and Moment B as subsidiary to the Moment in general we must proceed to one more step of subdivision. Moment a, and Moment b, are representative of the ordinary moments (here the term has a new meaning, it seems to me, H.H.) of daily human experience. Just as we subdivide the Moment that is history as such, (here Van Til identifies *the* Moment with history, H.H.) into Moment A and Moment B, so now we must subdivide Moment A and Moment B into moments a, b, c, . . . of ordinary human experience. If we are to deal with the 'universal' or law of history we need all these distinctions," pp. 11, 12.

As I have stated before, all this is not exactly lucid, the difficulty being that Van Til's contents or denotation of the term "Moment" appears to be rather changeable. But the general purpose of this part of his reasoning is to show the meaning of the Christian correlativity-idea. He himself states this as follows: "The individual (Adam, Christ, H.H.) can influence the nature of the universal (the human nature, H.H.) and the universal (the human nature, H.H.) can influence the nature of the individual (all men, the elect, the reprobate, H.H.).

The significance of all this for "common grace" as conceived by Van Til becomes evident when he applies this philosophy to God's counsel in relation to actual history as revealed to us in the Scriptures: to Adam in the state of righteousness, the probationary command, all men in their relation in Adam, and in him to God's command, God's attitude to Adam, and to all men in him, before the fall and after the fall, Christ and redemption in Him, election and reprobation, the general "offer" of salvation, and God's favorable attitude to all men. For it is to these that Van Til applies his basic principles of the philosophy of history as laid down in the first part of his work. One would expect that, having started from a broad basis, and having recognized the fact that the question of "common grace" really concerns the problem of history in relation to God in all its implications, Van Til would also build a broad superstructure, and be concerned with the problem of common grace in its comprehensive aspect. However, this is not the case. When he applies his principles of the philosophy of history developed in the first part of his book to the question of "common grace", he after all concerns himself only with the narrow question whether there is a common

attitude of God to the elect and reprobate in this world, the question of "the three points". And he argues that before the fall all men, elect and reprobate, in Adam were the objects of a common favor of God; that after the fall all men became the object of a common wrath, even so that God "hated all men", elect and reprobate; and that, therefore, there must be a certain "commonness" in God's attitude of favor to elect and reprobate to the end of time.

We are not now criticising his view. We are trying to show how Van Til applies his philosophy of the "Moment" to the question of common grace. As far as I can see, he does not place himself before the question of the value and significance of "the Moment" with respect to the final fruit and consummation of all things. He deals especially with Adam and all men in him. Let me quote a few more passages in this connection.

"The Christian idea of correlativity in the Moment finds concrete historical expression in the idea of representation. It was because of the true correlativity in the Moment that Adam could represent the whole human race. He, as an individual, could change the nature of the universal called human nature. This human nature was created good. Yet as such it was amendable to change by the action of the individual. It was not that abstract eternally unchangeable something which, on the principles of Parmenides, it should be. If it had been such, no historical action of any individual could have modified it. Man was perfect, but yet able to sin when first he came from the hand of God. On the other hand human nature was not amendable to change by the action of *every* individual. *If it had been it would have been no universal at all*, and would therefore have had no influence on individuals. . . Scripture speaks of Adam, the first historical individual, who could change the universal of human nature in such a decisive manner that all later historical individuals were born with an *evil character* for which they are yet held immediately responsible. All historical individuals who came after Adam are guilty as well as polluted before God. . . . This representative action would be impossible on any basis but that of correlativity between the historical universal and the historical particular as based on the counsel of God back of history. There was a true universality into which the first individual was born and this true universality was amendable to change by the first individual because he was the representative individual." p. 13.

Further:

"It is only on a Christian basis then that progress is possible. The action of the second Adam was meant, in the counsel of God, to follow the action of the first Adam. There was first a good human nature. Then through the action of the first Adam this good human nature became a sinful human nature. Through the

act of the second Adam this became, in the case of the elect a redeemed human nature. . . . No ordinary historical individual, a, b, c, could change the human nature made sinful by the first representative individual. . . . If the Moment as such was to have significance, Moment B, in which the divine representative Individual changed sinful human nature, had to follow Moment A, in which the human representative changed the original good human nature." p. 14.

On p. 62:

. . . . "When history is finished God no longer has any kind of favor toward the reprobate. They still exist and God has pleasure in their existence, but not in the fact of their bare existence. God has pleasure in their historically *defeated* existence. . . . Therefore God no longer in any sense *classifies* him in a generality with the elect. It was only at an earlier date before the consummation of their wicked striving was made complete that God even *in a sense* classified him with the elect. . . . When God first spoke to Adam he did so as the representative of all men. . . . When he fell all men *became* sinners; they became in Adam the objects of God's wrath. . . . It was by the same negative act to the same 'offer' that *all* men lost the favor of God and became the objects of the 'common' wrath of God. . . . The elect of God are always the objects of favor in the ultimate sense. . . . Then the elect became sinners in Adam and as sinners the object of God's wrath. . . . Thus the elect, together with the reprobate are objects of Gods' wrath."

Again and again Van Til refers to the "commonness" between the elect and the reprobate that existed in paradise. According to him, both the elect and reprobate performed good action in Adam up to a certain point. "There was not only (a) commonness of mere existence. There was (b) commonness of official capacity. There was (c) commonness of good action in official capacity. Thus there was *genuine* commonness in good up to a certain point between believers and non-believers. There was a *genuine* commonness in evil up to a point after the fall. There is no reason why there should not be *genuine* commonness up to a point throughout the course of history as long as the consummation of wickedness has not been reached." p. 64.

One more quotation: "We need not hesitate to affirm then that in the beginning God loved mankind in general. That was before mankind had sinned against God. A little later God hated mankind in general. . . . So the elect and reprobate are under a *common wrath*." p. 95.

This may be considered to give a fair idea of the way Van Til applies his conception of the Moment and correlativity in the Moment to the problem of common grace. Next time, the Lord willing, we will offer our criticism on this point. H. H.

The Hope Of The Resurrection

What Christian, who is at all acquainted with the Bible, when he hears of the resurrection of the dead, does not at once think of that mighty resurrection song that is the contents of the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians? Not, indeed, as if that chapter were the only Scriptural passage that speaks of the resurrection: there are many others. Often the Lord makes mention of it. More than once He foretold His own resurrection on the third day. To the sister of Lazarus that came to meet Him after her brother's death, He says: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Solemnly He assures His people: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. John 5:25. And again: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. His own glorious resurrection is the very heart of the gospel which the apostles proclaim in the world after His ascension into heaven, and this resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the basis and pledge of the glorious resurrection of all His own. For "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. 8:11. And they that have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan within themselves, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. 8:23. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." I Thess. 4:14. And it is through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that we are begotten again unto a lively hope, I Pet. 1:13. But although the doctrine of the resurrection is taught everywhere in the New Testament, nowhere is there a passage like I Corinthians 15, the whole of which is entirely devoted to the exposition of this glorious truth.

The occasion for the writing of this chapter was a heresy in the congregation of Corinth. There were, namely, some among them that denied the resurrection of the dead. They simply insisted that there is no resurrection of the dead. Hence, the apostle in writing this wonderful chapter proceeds from the firm ground of the resurrection of Christ. For so he had preached the gospel to them, and so had they believed, that Christ died for their sins, and that He was buried, and that He was raised the third day. Surely, this

resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a well established fact, corroborated by many witnesses, whose testimony that they had seen Him after the resurrection cannot very well be gainsaid. And Paul himself could testify that he had become a witness of the risen Lord. And the apostle concludes this section: "Therefore. . . so we preach, and so ye believed." How then could some of them say that there is no resurrection of the dead, and argue, probably, that the whole idea of a resurrection is absurd? For, to be sure, if the sweeping statement that there is no resurrection of the dead be true, it follows that one must also deny the reality and truth of the resurrection of Christ. But if Christ is not raised, all our faith is vain: we are still in our sin. But Christ is raised, and therefore, also the resurrection of His people is an established truth, the object of a sure hope. For the risen Lord has become the firstfruits of them that slept, and they shall surely follow Him in the glorious resurrection. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But each enters the resurrection glory in his own order: Christ is first, for He is the firstfruits; afterwards come they that are His, at His coming. But the resurrection cannot be denied. Death shall surely be swallowed up in victory, and that last enemy shall certainly be destroyed by Him unto Whom all things are subjected.

After having established and applied all this in the first section of this beautiful chapter, the apostle turns his attention to the nature of the resurrection-body. He introduces this part of the chapter by a question which he supposes that someone might ask: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" Evidently, this question might be asked in a spirit of contradiction by someone who, even after the apostle had demonstrated the certainty of the resurrection, might still intend to expose its absurdity. You have people like that. After you have shown them the truth, and they cannot deny it, they make a last attempt to overthrow the truth of the gospel by trying to show the absurdity and impossibility of it all. And so someone might ask: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" But to such an one the apostle replies: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." vs. 36. And let us not misunderstand the meaning of the apostle. He does not mean to assert or to demonstrate that the resurrection lies within the scope of our rational comprehension. From a rational viewpoint there is, indeed, room for the question of incredulity: how are the dead raised up? For consider what becomes of our bodies after death. They are utterly decomposed, so that there is nothing left of them after a short time. And their chemical substances assume other forms, and become part of other bodies. How then can there be a resurrection

of the dead? What body is there to be raised? With what body do they come? But, although this is true, the question is, nevertheless, foolish, for the simple reason that it assumes that whatever lies outside of the scope of our reason cannot possibly be true. Let this incredulous questioner but look about him, and read the very language of the resurrection in the things that are seen. For also the resurrection of the dead takes place repeatedly in the parable of the seed that must die before it is quickened again. Yet even this parable in nature we do not comprehend.

But, of course, the same question concerning the body of the resurrection may also be asked by faith, and with a real spiritual interest to know a little of this wonderful mystery. And to them the apostle replies: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." In these words the resurrection body is compared with our present bodies from a fourfold viewpoint. Let us look at these distinctions a little more closely.

But first, let us notice that the apostle also here compares physical death and the resurrection to the quickening of a seed that is sown. With a view to the resurrection, burial is like the sowing of a seed. For those that believe in Christ crucified and raised, death has lost its sting, the grave its victory. They bury their dead as the husbandman sows his seed: in the hope of the resurrection. But notice that this metaphor also has something to tell us about the nature of the resurrection. It informs us, first of all that it is emphatically resurrection, not a new creation out of nothing. It is the quickening of that which is dead. However incomprehensible it may be for us, however impossible it may appear to our understanding, that our completely decomposed bodies shall be called out of the dust and appear in glory, yet that is exactly what is meant by the resurrection of the dead. Essentially the same body that is apparently swallowed up of death shall be raised in glory. When a peasant sows wheat, he does not expect a crop of barley; and when he sows rye, he does not look for a crop of corn. And so, essentially the same body that is sown will appear again in the resurrection. We may ask, perhaps, what belongs to the very essence of a human body? And to this question we would give a threefold reply. In the first place, it belongs to the essence of a human body exactly that it is a body, i.e. that it is material. We are not speaking now of the kind of matter of which the resurrection body will be composed; but it must be established that it is a body, and, therefore, material. Secondly, it belongs to the very nature of a human body that it is *human*. There is a

wide difference between the organism of a human body, and that of the animal. And we may, no doubt, denote this difference in a general way by saying that the human body is adapted to be instrumental in the reflection and manifestation of the image of God in man. Hence, that it is a body through which the image of God may shine forth, I take it, belongs to the very nature of a human body. Lastly a human body is individual. Even though there are millions upon millions of men, and you easily recognize them as human beings, yet there are no two individual human beings alike, either in soul or in body. And each individual human person or spirit requires his own individual body. You could not function or live in my body, neither would my person be able to express itself in your bodies. We may conclude, then, that the resurrection body will be like our present body in this threefold respect: it will be material; it will be the proper instrument for the reflection of the image of God; and it will be distinctively individual: each one will receive his own body. The body that is sown in death will be quickened in the resurrection.

However, even though the resurrection body will be essentially the same body that is stored away in the grave, it will be quite different in form from the latter. It will be elevated to the higher plane of the kingdom of heaven. It will be glorified, even as was the resurrection body of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this implies, first of all, that all the effects of sin will be erased completely, and that it will not only be delivered from the corruption of death, but it will be wholly victorious over death. It will be beyond the reach of the claws of death. For it will have put on immortality, and it will exist in the sphere of incorruptibility. To denote this, the apostle makes the threefold distinction between the sphere of corruption and incorruption, of dishonour and glory, of weakness and strength.

It is sown in corruption. This means that the existence of our present bodies is wholly characterized by corruption. On the one hand, there are corrupting agencies at work in our bodies from the moment we are born, germs that enter into them from without, and that tend to disintegrate, to decompose, to destroy the marvellous organism of our bodies. These corrupting agencies are all about us: they are in the air we breathe, in the food we eat, in the water we drink. Think only of the tiny wild beast that is called the tubercular germ, that swarms into our lungs to destroy us. And it signifies on the other hand, that our bodies are exposed to this corruption: they are corruptible. They are not, and they never will be victorious over these powers of corruption that drag us to the grave. This process of corruption begins at the very moment we enter into this world, for we exist in the very sphere of corruption. Throughout our lives it reveals

itself in all kinds of diseases, both physical and mental, for soul and body are very closely and delicately intertwined. And it has its consummation, when physical death finally has the victory over us, and the process of corruption is completed in the grave.

But there is more. It is sown in weakness. This implies that our present bodies possess only a limited amount of strength. They cannot continue forever. They have no inexhaustible source of power to live. And their amount of strength is small. It is measured by the span of threescore and ten years, or, at the most, by fourscore years; and we fly away. Even apart from any especially corrupting influences that ruin our bodies, our bodies decline in strength, our eyes grow dim, our ears grow dull, our shoulders stoop under the burden of years, our heart grows weary and exhausted, and we hasten into the arms of death. We are like the flower of the field, which, indeed, is destroyed when the wind passeth over it, but which withers and dies because of its limited strength, even though no storm breaks its tender stem.

And, lastly, our present bodies are sown in dishonour. In the text dishonour stands opposed to glory. The honour and glory of the human body is that it is the visible manifestation of the beauty of God's image, the instrument for the operation of the true knowledge of God, of positive righteousness, and of perfect holiness. The shame and dishonour of our physical organism is the very opposite. For we have lost the image of God, and our bodies have become the instruments of the lie, of iniquity and ethical corruption. And, besides, death has dominion over them. Corruption, sin, and death leave their marks all over the body, and cover them with shame. For a moment it may seem as if even the present body is still glorious, when it is blooming in the flower of its youth, but soon it becomes manifest that the Word of God is true, and when finally the corpse lies in the coffin, the undertaker may make an attempt to cover up its dishonour, yet even so it is repulsive: it is sown in dishonour!

But all this will be changed in the resurrection. For the glorious body of the resurrection will be raised in incorruption, in power, and in glory. In the sphere of the resurrection there will be no more destroying agencies that creep into our bodies to corrupt them; neither will the resurrection body be subject to any corruption. It will be incorruptible, completely victorious over all corrupting powers. These can never enter into that new world of the resurrection. It will be raised in power. The source of its strength will be inexhaustible, and it will perpetually renew its youth as the eagle's. Never shall it grow weary. For evermore it shall be able to function with perpetual vigor. And it will be raised in glory. For not only shall all the dishonouring vestiges of sin and corruption be erased, but it shall be raised to the higher level of

heavenly beauty. And the glory of the perfected image of God shall forever radiate from and through that new body. It will be a body that shall be far exalted in power and glory and beauty above the body which Adam possessed in paradise before the fall. For that body was, indeed, not corrupted, but it was, nevertheless, corruptible; it was not under the dominion of death, but it was, nevertheless, mortal; but the body of the resurrection is victorious over all, clothed with incorruptibility and immortality, and shining forth in heavenly beauty. And the reason for it all is, that the resurrection body has the source of its power and glory in the resurrected Lord, the Son of God, Who is the life and the resurrection!

But there is still another difference to which the apostle calls our attention. It is expressed in the words: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." The term "natural body" does not express the meaning of the original very adequately. The word used in the original might better be translated by our word "psychical". It is difficult to define the exact meaning of this term, and to describe clearly just what is meant by a "psychical body". But we may say something about it, especially in the light of what the apostle continues to write in this chapter. He goes on to explain that there is a "natural" or "psychical" body, and there is a spiritual body. And he reminds us of the fact that Adam was made a living soul, in distinction from whom Christ is made a quickening spirit. And he continues to teach that the first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. And as we now bear the image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. From this it seems clear that "natural" and "earthy" are closely related. Our present body is so constituted that because of it we are earthy. It is a soul-body. Through it we are bound to the earth with all the ties of our present existence. It is weighed down to the earth, and in it we could never ascend to heaven. It has earthy needs, and from the earth only it can be sustained. By the earth it is replenished. And it has the earthy senses of perception, through which it can have no contact with heavenly things, but only with things that are earthy. Even though with our present bodies, suppose this were possible, we were right in the midst of heavenly things, we would not be able to perceive them, to enjoy them, to inherit them. For "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven." vs. 10. In death a "natural" body is sown, that is a body in which our soul is strictly limited to earthy things, and through which it is impossible for us to apprehend the heavenly. And even when the heavenly realities are revealed to us, they are presented in earthly figures and symbols, in order that we may apprehend them by faith, and long for them in hope.

From all this it will also be evident that in contrast to our present natural body the spiritual body is not to be conceived as immaterial. In fact, an immaterial body is no body, but a spirit; and to speak of an immaterial body is a contradiction in terms. Rather must we understand by this term a body that is fully adapted to be an instrument of our glorified spirit as dominated by the Spirit of Christ. No doubt, the nature of the material of our resurrection body will be quite different from that of our present body. In answer to the question: "and with what body do they come?" the apostle reminds us that "all flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, and another of beasts, and another of birds, and another of fishes." So the same matter may assume different forms. The solid ice may melt into the fluid water, and the water may change into the volatile and invisible steam. Yet, it remains essentially the same body. If you sow the seed of a gladiola or dahlia, that seed will ultimately become a bulb, yet you still have the same body. And so, the resurrection body, though essentially the same as our present bodies will be quite different as to the nature of its material from our natural bodies. Through them we shall be able to apprehend the spiritual things of the kingdom of heaven. We shall see spiritual things, hear spiritual sounds, stand in direct relationship even with the angels of heaven, and see God face to face!

Hence, we must be changed, in order that we may inherit the kingdom of God. For most of us, part of that change lies through death and the grave, while the other part of this glorious change must wait till the hour of the resurrection. For others, those that shall live at the coming of the Lord, the whole change will come in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. That resurrection glory is the object of our hope, and we know that in this hope we shall not be ashamed. In hope we triumphantly shout in the face of death: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord!" I Cor. 15:55-58.

H. H.

CLASSIS EAST

will meet in regular session, D. V., January 6, 1943, at 9 o'clock at the Fuller Ave., Church.

D. JONKER, Stated Clerk.

The New Separation From the Heathenism of Midia

In the previous issue of this magazine there appeared an article from my pen that bore the title "Israel's Sins." The title should have been the one appearing above this writing.

The subject dealt with was the whoredoms and idolatry of the people of Israel in the plains of Moab, their joining themselves to Baal-peor and the subsequent death of twenty four thousand of their number by the fire of God's anger that flamed against them.

We must now state and explain the significance of this event. The people of Israel, as the army of God, were about to address themselves to the task of warring God's warfare for the possession of the promised land. The performance of this task had to be a venture of faith. It had to be undertaken in the assurance that the battle is the Lord's and that the victory to be achieved is His gracious gift. Moreover it was a task that had to be performed under the impulse of the love of God. But there were too many in the camp who were devoid of true faith. Men they were who deneid God in their hearts and who lusted after the things of this earth and the pleasures of sin connected with the worship of idols.

With the presence of this element in the camp, the army of God would continually be exposed to the curse. There would be little inclination on the part of such people to wage a war of extermination also against the devil-gods infesting Canaan. It was to eliminate this element, or at least to so diminish its number as to render its influence negligible, that God so arranged His providence that the Midianites in collaboration with Moab, acting on the counsel of Balaam, sent their daughters into the camp of Israel to invite God's people to the sacrifices of their gods. The call was heeded. A great number perished by the plague. So was the army of God freed from libertinism in the leaders, and hypocrisy in the small, from all the mingling of hallowed festive service, with seductive and corrupting feasts, in a word, from the heathenism of Midian.

This event had significance in still another respect. The Lord through Moses had over and over cautioned His people against fraternizing with the heathen and serving their gods. He had told them that such practices would without fail lead to disaster. The old generation had been provided with proof that this was no idle threat. In consequence of their worshipping the golden calf at Mount Sinai, many of them had been slain. The terrible judgment had made a deep impression. We do not again read of this generation involving themselves in this sin. But the Israel encamped in the plains of Moab

was a new generation. Could it be that time had so dimmed their recollection of the catastrophe at Sinai, that they no longer trembled at the thought of it, and that thus the sin that had called forth this judgment had lost for them some of its heinousness? It would seem so, judging from the ease with which they heeded the call of Moab to idolatrous worship. So the Lord demonstrated also to the men of this generation that religious apostasy leads to certain ruin. The lesson was taken to heart. The army of God that invaded Canaan was an army purged to a large extent from idolaters and one that trembled before the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The task that had to be performed—the extirpation of the Canaanites and the destruction of their idolatrous worship—called for just such an army. It is worthy of note that the generation by which the conquest of Canaan was achieved did not serve idols and that it was not until after this generation had passed away that the nation again committed this sin. We come upon this notice in the book of Judges (2:7-12): "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun died. . . . and also that generation were gathered unto their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim."

G. M. O.

Martyrdom under the Several Roman Emperors

Having passed in review the history of this martyrdom, let us now attend to the "why" of it and to its significance.

To begin and to end with this hostility of the heathen world toward the primitive church in the men of this world, in their wickedness, more particular, in their native hatred of the truth or of God's gospel, or in the various other motives by which they were driven in troubling God's people, is to be at a loss how to explain the reception of the gospel on the part of the others unless one wants to take the position, as many do, that they were men and women *inherently* better than the wicked by whom they were harassed. But we know that "*all* are under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God," Rom. 3:10, 11.

When the question is one of the *sovereign* reason of this hostility, we must certainly look to God with an appeal to Rom. 9:18, "and whom *he* will he hardeneth." As it is with all things, so it is with this martyrdom,—it remains in the final instance an unanswered question, if in uncovering its causes, God is not in all our thoughts as One Who "worketh all things after the council of his own will," Eph. 1:11. It is only as armed with this truth as a working principle that we have true understanding of events and movements in history.

In hardening the heathen—the persecutors of the Believers—God used means both objective and subjective. The objective means was the very gospel and the men and women in whose lives it was seen to bear fruit. The gospel was a savor of death unto death with respect to the persecuting heathen. But it was this as God's means. But there are in addition, subjective means to be mentioned, to wit, the wickedness of the heathen, their hatred, pride, sinful lusts, and superstitions. As God, in the language of the apostle, gave up the heathen to uncleanness through the *lusts* of their own hearts—mark you, through the lusts of their own heart—(Rom. 1:24), so did He give up these same heathen to the sin of actively hating and persecuting the church, through the wickedness—pride, selfishness, superstition and the like—that dwelt in their flesh. To express this same fact and truth in a language borrowed from the Old Testament Scriptures, He turned the heart of the heathen to hate the Christians and to deal subtly with them, (Ps. 105:25), and, God moved the heathen against the Christians to say, Come, let us destroy them, (2 Sam. 24:1).

So then, these persecutions were God's work—a work in which the heathen functioned as His agent but on this account, certainly, non the less responsible. What they did to the Christians, they desired and willed to do and in doing what they did they acted in full agreement with their character. So all the fault was theirs. But God moved them.

Now both God and the heathen had their own reasons, designs. It is of importance to know the reasons of the heathen; but it is of far greater importance to know God's reasons. If we be willingly ignorant of the latter—ignorant of the fact and truth that He moved the heathen to persecute His people—all our inquiring after the true significance of this early martyrdom is an essentially fruitless occupation. We will not know. What has weight here is not why the heathen persecuted the church, but why God willed that they should.

What were the heathen's reasons? There were several. The basic of these is set forth by St. John in this language: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called

the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew not him", John 3:1. And again, and this with reference to Cain, "And wherefore slew he him (Abel)? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous," John 3:12. Fundamentally the spiritual contest between paganism and Christianity was a combat between good and evil, a struggle of darkness against light, but a struggle in which light had the victory. These early persecutions formed hell's answer to the preaching of Paul.

When, in obedience to the command of Christ, the gospel ministers of the church went forth to preach the tidings of salvation to all creatures, pagan civilization and culture had attained to the measure of its fulness. It was the golden age of literature. The far-flung empire, whose internal organization was perfected by Trajan, stood under a well-ordained jurisdiction. The seas had been swept of piracy. Canals had been dug and military roads had been built and the result was that commerce flourished on the Mediterranean Sea. There was protection of life and property. Improved methods of farming had increased the yield of the soil. The great cities were renowned for their temples, theatres, aqueducts, swimming pools, and magnificent buildings of every kind. Industry in all its departments prospered. Institutions of learning sowed abroad culture. Though the printing press is an invention of our modern era, books in ancient Rome were plentiful and cheap as copies were multiplied by hundreds of slaves employed as scribes. A house without a private library was not considered respectable; public libraries were in every great city and resorted to by the cultured.

Assuredly, on the surface we have to do here with a lovely and magnificent achievement. The eighty-four years from the accession of Nerva to the death of Marcus Aurelius—a period in which the Roman empire was at the height of its glory—has been pronounced by some "the most happy and prosperous period in the history of the world.

It was this perhaps but only on the surface. The civilization and culture of the Roman-Graeco world was rotten at the core. The majority of men were wretchedly poor or they were slaves and as such were treated like beasts of burden; gladiatorial shows, i.e. public games in which men were forced into mortal combat with their fellow men or with wild beasts for the amusement of the people—the free citizens—were the order of the day in Rome. There was perpetual war between the legions of Rome and the fierce barbarian tribes who dwelt on the border of the empire; and the followers of Christ—the most loyal and virtuous of subjects—were being thrown to wild beasts or driven into exile for no other reason than their being Christians. The luxury that resulted from the influx of wealth from the conquered nations

was amazingly extravagant. Fortunes were spent on the pleasures of the table. The belly was the god of the rich. They ate until they were replete and then resorted to an agent of emptying the stomach and ate again. With luxury came the vices of sensuality, both natural and unnatural. Avarice, suspicion, robbery and bribery prevailed on every hand. The idea of natural sympathy and kindness between man and man seems hardly to have existed. Poisonings and assassinations were so common that such atrocities seem hardly to have been regarded as a breach of morality. There were no alms-houses, no hospitals, no societies of benevolence.

Alongside of great wealth was hopeless poverty. The provinces were exhausted by enormous taxes and industry was crushed by slavery so that an immense number of the population was but slightly removed from begging. The slaves came from the conquered nations and they were so plentiful and cheap that the masters inhumanly wore them out by neglect and hard usage.

As to the emperors, all were godless men and not a few of them were monsters of iniquity. Soon Tiberius entered upon a career of crime and surrendered himself to luxury, and to every sensual indulgence. Caligula was wholly under the dominion of lust and passions, and his cruelty was equal to his insane folly. He had men tortured, beheaded, or sawn in pieces for his amusement. Demonized by cruelty, he was heard to express the wish that all the Roman people had but one neck, that he might dispatch them at a blow. The vileness of Nero was bottomless. Claudius, in the midst of his boundless debaucheries, was an imbecile brute. Vitellius, though neither cruel nor tyrannical, surrendered himself to every possible degree of voluptuousness, and self-indulgence. Domitian amused himself most with the torments of the dying. Commodus with his hundreds of concubines idled away his time with butchering men and beasts in the arena. Heliogabalus, as dressed in women's clothes, was joined in marriage to a profligate boy like himself. He violated all the laws of nature and was at last butchered by the soldiers and thrown into the Tiber. And after their death such monsters, by the authority of the senate, were canonized gods; and their memory was perpetuated by festivals and temples.

Certainly the apostle Paul's picture (Rom. 1) of the state of corruption of the Graeco-Roman world, is not overdrawn.

All this corruption and wickedness was concentrated in Rome, though not confined to this city. This metropolis was the chief offender. "Never, probably", says Canon Farrar, "was there any age or any place where the worst forms of wickedness were practiced with a more unblushing effrontery than in the city of Rome under the government of the Caesars."

But, as was just said, this wickedness was not confined to Rome. Every city of considerable size had its gladiatorial shows; and the amphitheatre was the most imposing building. There murder was practiced as a sport, from morning to evening, and countless men and beasts were sacrificed to satisfy a thirst for blood on the part of the onlooking populace. The human combatants, called gladiators, were condemned criminals and captives of war. Paganism assumed supreme lordship over human life and dealt with it as it pleased.

Thus it is not strange that the religion of Jesus Christ roused the nameless pollution of Rome to a frenzy of rage, and that an attempt was made to crush the faith of the Church. Rome's works were evil. And the religion of Christ was pure. It denounced adultery and extortion and all manner of evil. It demanded of men that they forsake their abominations, turn to the living God, and be saved from their sins by faith in His resurrected Christ. It proclaimed that God looked down with holy indignation upon idolatry, that He would avenge all wrong and that a day was coming when all the world would stand at His tribunal and that every man—emperor and slave—should receive according to his deeds.

However, examining this rage and the causes of it, we discover that each social cast had a reason of its own why it hated and persecuted God's people. The religion of Christ disrupted the family, as when one or two of its members would believe and the others would cleave to their gods and persist in their sins. Then, as Christ had foretold, the brother delivered up brother to death, and the father his child; and children rose up against parents, and caused them to be put to death. As the second century drew to a close, there was scarcely a family but some member of it—slave or mistress, freedman or master, son or daughter—belonged to the community of Christians.

The great Roman statesmen including the best of the emperors, the serious thinkers who in their heart were too conscious that the pagan religion of the empire was unreal, viewed Christianity as the Empire's deadliest foe, an enemy which must be stamped out. For they were persuaded that the old State religion, with its immemorial traditions, was the policy which had built up and was the bulwark of Rome's worldwide empire. In their eyes, the followers of Christ formed a strangled and dangerous community. They chose to live outside the pale of the religion of Rome. They refused to worship as God the emperor and his statue, and to take part in any idolatrous ceremonies at public festivals. They disregarded politics and depreciated all civil and temporal affairs; and this of necessity as politics and these affairs were in a state of hopeless corruption. Thus the Christian religion and its devotees stood quite alone among all the religions of the

empire. And the spiritual antagonism was mutual. All the other gods of the empire were allowed to dwell together with the gods of Rome. There was mutual regard. In Rome the Persian Mithras, the Egyptian Isis, and the Roman Jupiter each had their temples and their altars side by side. But not so the God of the Christians. This is understandable. There was concord between Jupiter, Isis and Mithras. Gods they were, made by man himself in his own image. But the god of the Christians is light. In Him dwelleth no darkness at all.

The trader in sheep and oxen, and the maker of images and other ritual belongings hated the Christian because he spoiled the various markets open to them in connection with the sacrifices of the gods. The priestly cast disliked the Christian with a deadly antagonism, for as christianity gained ground, the temples of the gods were depleted and the priests had to go a begging.

Finally, the superstitious common people had the grievance. They regarded the dreadful public calamities of that age as punishment justly inflicted by the angry gods for the disregard of their worship. In every flood, or drought, or famine, or pestilence, the fanatical populace cried: "Away with atheists! To the lions with the Christians."

Finally, to the Jews the gospel was an offence and foolishness to the wisemen in the world, to such as strove by their own wisdom to know God. An outstanding example of the latter class was Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic philosopher in the throne of the Caesars. The pagan religiousness and righteousness of Marcus is striking. Face to face with Christianity, he, from superstitious fear, honored the Roman gods. In his "Meditations" there is much that approaches the ethics of Christianity. Everywhere there is constant reference to the gods, not only to the ancient gods of Rome but to the Eastern deities with their corrupting rites as well. He sympathizes with all religions save one — the religion of Christ. Towards Christianity he is hostile. In his "Meditations" he alludes to it but once and this with scorn. Under his reign there flowed much Christian blood; and all the while he turned a deaf ear to the apologies of the Christian apologists by which he was flooded.

So were the Christians hated of all men, as Christ had foretold. Writing to Timothy, Paul with reference to himself asserts: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, *because I did it ignorantly in my unbelief*". 1 Tim. 1:13. So too, the persecuting heathen of the period of which we now write, they did it ignorantly in their unbelief. Their measure of guilt is thus not as great as that of those enemies of Christ of whom it is said (Heb. 6:4—9) that they were once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, were made partak-

ers of the Holy Spirit, tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come and crucified to themselves the son of God afresh.

A brief word about the significance of these persecutions in the following article.

G.M.O.

Vermogende Alle Dingen

Fillip. 4:13.

De verzen van dit hoofdstuk vormen een geheel van vermaningen en staan dan ook in nauw verband met het leven in al zijn schakeeringen. Dit is duidelijk als we letten op de wijze waarop de Apostel de onderlinge verhoudingen door eensgezindheid wil zien gekenmerkt en geopenbaard worden.

Niet zoo, alsof zoude er tweespalt zijn in de gemeente, want de Apostel verblijdt zich immers in het feit, dat zij zijne blijdschap zijn in den Heere. En terwille van die eenheid schrijft hij dan ook aan Euodia en Syntyche, die wellicht een kleine uitzondering maakten, die wellicht beiden zeer bekwaam waren, doch het met elkander nu juist niet zoo goed konden vinden.

Trouwens, ook dan wanneer er geen ergerlijke misstanden zijn in de gemeente, is het juist wel op zijn plaats om voor mogelijke oneenigheid te waarschuwen. Het gaat er dan ook meestal wel in.

Daarna richt hij zich tot de gemeente, haar wijzende, dat zij in geen ding bezorgd zal zijn, doch in alles en ten allen tijde waakzaam worde bevonden in bidden en smeeke, met dankzegging haar nood en behoeften den Heere zullen bekend maken.

Van uit het algemeene der vermaningen, roept hij vervolgens de gemeente its uit zijn eigen leven en levenservaring hen voor de aandacht. En in dat leven van den apostel was nog al heel wat afwisseling. Hij wist van gebrek te lijden en zich in overvloed te kunnen verblijden. Hij was in alles onderwezen. De levensschool waarop hij de lessen geleerd had was niet altijd gemakkelijk geweest. Doch op die school had hij vermocht alle dingen te kunnen door Christus zijn Heiland die Hem kracht geeft. Hij had alle dingen niet slechts ontvangen en verdragen, doch deze allen waren hem uit s'Heeren hand geschonken.

Het is met het oog op die geestelijke ervaring, dat de Apostel hen dan ook wil vermanen, opdat ook zij in staat zullen zijn, alle dingen te kunnen doen, die de Heere hen toebedeeld.

De Apostel gebruikt hier zeer sterke taal, als hij zegt: Ik kan alle dingen doen (I can do all things). Bij den eersten oogopslag zouden we geneigd zijn te lezen, ik verdraag alle dingen. Wat bedoelt hij nu?

Is er niets of hij is bekwaam het te verrichten? Dat kan natuurlijk de verklaring niet zijn, want we hebben hier niet te doen met een vergelijking, die hij maakt tusschen zichzelf en anderen, doch de sprake des geloofs, het getuigenis der geloofservaring. Er zijn van die mensen, die in hoogmoed wel eens zeggen, wat een ander kan doen, dat kan ik ook.

Of heeft de Apostel wellicht zijn ambt, gaven en talent en vermogen tot het volbrengen van Zijn Apostolische arbeid op het oog? Dan toch is de gedachte, dat hij in onderscheiding van de andere Apostelen, zooveel meer kon doen en gedaan heeft. We weten echter, dat hij dit zelf noemt een roemen in dwaasheid, sprekende naar den mensch. Trouwens, schoon hij daar het oog niet op heeft, op den arbeid als Apostel, zou dat ook niet waar zijn. Wel is het waar, dat hij meer gearbeid en meer overvloedig is geweest dan de anderen, doch aan hem waren tenslotte niet al de gaven, noodig voor het Apostolisch ambt, geschonken. Petrus en Johannes en de anderen bezaten zeer zeker gaven, die bij den Apostel gemist worden. Het ging hen, zooals het ook tot openbaring komt in het lichaam van Christus (de Kerk), dat niemand in zich al de gaven draagt, doch dat het omgekeerde waar, God de Heere gaf al de gaven in rijke verscheidenheid.

Het is dan ook al te gedrongen, om hier in den tekst te denken aan het Apostolische ambt. Tekst en verband, in wat voorafgaat en in wat volgt, maken daar in het geheel geen melding van.

Neen, maar waar het hem te doen is, om de gemeente te wijzen op één der werkzaamheden des geloofs, daar roept hij voor hun aandacht zijn eigen leven en levenservaring. Wilt ge, hij spreekt hier als kind van God, over hetgeen de kinderen Gods met hem gemeen hebben.

En let er nu op, dat hij zijn leven ten voorbeeld stellende, daarmee zich aansluit, bij wat schier alle kinderen Gods ervaren. Vooral in zijn eigen tijd.

Hij vermocht te doen.

Hij vermocht te verdragen? Och, zoo zeggen en bedoelen wij het vaak, nietwaar? Het "lot" ons toebedeeld is eigenlijk te zwaar, maar tenslotte zullen we het stillekens dragen. Of ook, we zullen ons openbaren, maar als mannen, die zelfs onder den druk door hun veer en spierkracht niet hebben verloren. (Yes, we can stand it). Het is immers toch al te kinderachtig om onder allerlei leed en ellende te zuchten? Zoo betaamt he timmers den Christen? Welneen, zoo juist niet! Hij moet op zijn tanden bijten en zich onder leed en ellende niet laten meesleepen, door die ellende en dat leed? Hebt ge weleens gemerkt, wanneer op de tanden wordt gebeten, dat dit geschied met gebalde vuist? Dat is wel mannelijk, maar uit het vleesch en heeft niets te maken met geloofswerkzaamheid.

Waar dan nog bijkomt, dat de Apostel hier in het

geheel niet spreekt van een passieve houding, die hij zou hebben aangenomen, doch op een actieven dienst het oog heeft.

Hij heeft zoo ongeveer van alles ervaren. Soms hongerde hem en was er een tekort aan voedsel. Dan weer was er overvloed. En onder die beiden was hij niet alleen vergenoegd, doch in en onder die beiden vermocht hij te doen, wat God de Heere van hem eischte.

Dit wil daarom niet zeggen, ik heb op den Heere vertrouwd, mijne wederwaardigheden ten spijt. Maar wat ook de Apostel van nature niet wilde, is toch door hem verricht. Hij heeft allereerst, zijn wil verzaakt en des Heeren wil gewild. Hij heeft zijn eigen oordeel terzijde geschoven en Gods oordeel over hem als het zijne aanvaard.

Daarom, zonder te vragen naar eigen wil en niet te handelen naar eigen oordeel, heeft Paulus in alles en ten allen tijde gevraagd en gebeden om den alleen goeden wil des Heeren. Het leven was dan ook voor hem geen lot, doch een gave hem door den Heere geschonken. Daarop wijst hij dan ook als hij zegt: Ik heb geleerd. Het is voor den natuurlijken mensch een groot geheim, hoe het toch mogelijk is, om aldus te leven. De Apostel zegt dan ook feitelijk, "I have been initiated", ik ben door den Heere ingeleid, zoodat ik klaar en duidelijk mijn leven heb leeren zien, met alles wat ik daarin ervaren heb, als één Zijner gaven, voor mij goed en vrede schenkende.

Daarom en daarom alleen kan hij nu ook de gemeente vermanen. Het pad van den Apostel en dat van de kinderen Gods loopt nooit zoo heel ver uiteen. We zouden wel durven zeggen, er is principieel geen verschil in wat de Kerk van alle eeuwen ervaart. En juist omdat daarin geen verschil bestaat, komt dan ook een ieder hunner voor dezelfde vraag te staan: Zullen we alle dingen kunnen en vermogen te doen?

Ik zou haast zeggen, dat het overbodig is om te beweren, dat de natuurlijke mensch, dat wij, zooals we van nature zijn, dit nooit kunnen doen. Het neemt ook maar heel weinig tegenspoed en we behoeven nog niet tot armoede te vervallen, om niet *te kunnen doen*. Wat al een zacht zuchten, een gemelijk en ongedurig de tijden, wanneer het minste en geringste ons niet aanstaat. Een zich veel te veel bekommeren, wanneer het slechts voorbij drijvende wolken zijn. Jawel, als het pad effen en als met roosen bezaaid is, dan ja, kan het gebeuren dat zelfs de natuurlijke mensch opgewekt schijnt en vrede heeft. Maar wat dan, als de stormen waarlijk opsteken en het rustig-alledaagsche verandert in tegenspoed, verdrukking, vervolging—het ontbreken van het allernoodigste? Om dan te kunnen zeggen, ik kan maar niet alles dragen, doch ik wil dat alles aanvaarden, omdat ik het uit de hand van mijn hemelsche Vader ontvangen heb. Hoe zwaar de weg moge zijn of worde, die weg wil ik op en door en

zal, zonder murmureeren, hem ten einde toe bewandelen.

Welnu, zoo deed de Apostel het. Neen, niet omdat hij door natuurlijke oefening gehard en gestaald was. Hij was waarlijk alle andere menschen en niets menschelijks was hem daarom vreemd.

De bron waaruit hij die kracht ontving is een geheel andere. Dat toch wordt alleen mogelijk door Christus die hem kracht gaf.

De Christus Die voor Hem gestorven was en opstond uit het graf, is degene, die ook met Zijn opstandingsleven, den Apostel vervulde. Aan dien Christus was hij immers verbonden door den band des geloofs? En het karakteristieke van den band des geloofs is, dat het uit Christus trekt.

Beiden dus, het geloof en de geloofswerkzaamheid of geloofsactie zijn uit Christus. Het is alles van en uit en door den Heiland, dat Paulus deze heerlijke belijdenis uitspreken kan.

De tekst zegt dan ook eigenlijk: ik kan en vermag te doen alle dingen, omdat Christus Zijn kracht in mij uitstort.

Dat houdt dan ook vervolgens in, dat alleen wanneer Gods kind dicht bij zijn Heiland leeft, hij deze kracht, als levensactie ervaart. Naar de mate hij dus leeft dicht bij het Woord, dat is, dicht bij Zijn Heiland, zal hij in staat zijn, dit getuigenis hartgrondig uit te spreken.

Daarop wijst, onzes inziens de Apostel, in dit vers. Het is maar niet een zekere formule van een bepaalde confessie, doch een belijdenis van wat hij ook in het leven heeft ervaren.

Daarom is de vermaning ook duidelijk.

Allereerst, zullen de broeders en zusters aan wien hij schrijft (en met hen geheel de kerk) moeten afzien van alle kracht van henzelfen. Die kracht gaat nooit verder dan het vleesch en is niet in staat, hen gewillig te doen zijn, om Gods weg en wil als hun weg en wil op gansch het levenspad te aanvaarden.

In de tweede plaats, zal het dan ook wel overduidelijk zijn en steeds meer worden, dat Christus alleen de kracht van hunne kracht is.

In de derde plaats, zal in dien weg, met het oog op wat Christus in hen uitstort, dat ook de geestelijke ervaring gelijk het de ervaring was van den Apostel: "Ik vermag alle dingen door Christus Die mij kracht geeft".

W. V.

PARENTS OF SOLDIERS! — Please send address of boys to Ralph Schaafsma, 1101 Hazen St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

God's Judgments and War

It is generally agreed in orthodox church circles today that the present "global-war" must be viewed as a judgment of God upon the earth. To be sure, another explanation is offered of this conflict. It is said that we are fighting for the most precious heritage which man can possibly enjoy, namely, the right and liberty for each man to live his own life. And we are fighting for this invaluable possession over against the forces of barbarism and cruelty. This explanation would explain the present world-wide conflict solely from the viewpoint of man. However, it is generally acknowledged, particularly in orthodox church circles, mankind today is being visited by the judgments of God.

One hears much today of the terribleness of war. And, indeed, who will describe the misery which is the inevitable result of a conflict such as is being waged today, the like of which the world has never before witnessed? The world had not even recovered from the horrors of 25 years ago when it was plunged into another catastrophe greater than the one before. The scars of that conflict are still in evidence among us. What a misery a war as of the present must leave in its wake! What an agony of soul caused by the fact that thousands upon thousands fail to return from the various battle-fronts! Besides, how many will there be who are rendered helpless invalids throughout their mortal days? "War is hell", declared a certain general some years ago; and, although he with these words clearly revealed that he had not the faintest conception of hell, we are all nevertheless agreed as to the terribleness of war.

This, however, views war merely from the human point of view. There is another aspect of war which is oftentimes entirely lost sight of. Do we, as people of God, ever ask ourselves the question, "However terrible this war and all wars may be, would it not be more terrible if, in this world of sin and darkness and corruption, all wars and rumors of wars would cease?" Do we sufficiently realize, not only that God is somehow realizing His eternal kingdom through these catastrophes, but that the holy and just and righteous God cannot reveal Himself differently to a perverse and godless generation than in the way of judgment? Would a different manifestation of the God of our salvation be more comforting and reassuring to the church of God? However dreadful war may be and however terrible the misery may be which always follows in its wake, is it not true that war, when viewed from the viewpoint of God, assumes an entirely different aspect? It is said that wars are the result of sin, also of the sins of the church, and that if the people of God confess their sin this war will soon end,

that victory will be our's. But is it Scriptural to teach that if the church of God confess her sin, these wars will cease in the midst of the world? It seems to me that we must view these matters from another and more realistic point of view.

Indeed, wars are the result of sin. This is an undeniable fact. Lust for power has been a cause of war throughout the ages. History abundantly testifies to this fact. Men like Alexander the Great and Napoleon were certainly driven on by a mad thirst for world-domination. And does it not belong to the creed of Nazism that the German race is the superior race, and that all other peoples must be subject to it? Besides, is it not generally acknowledged today, also in the democratic countries of the world, that this present conflict and the last world-war are inseparably related to each other? Must we not now lay the groundwork for a lasting and enduring and just peace and avoid the mistakes which were made some 25 years ago? Moreover, what else than war can we expect of men (including ourselves) concerning whom we confess that they are conceived and born dead in sins and trespasses, haters of God, and enemies of one another? Is not war the natural result of the principle of enmity which fills the hearts of all men? Surely, war is the result of sin. None would dare refute this fact.

Moreover, also in this respect the church of God has a calling. Firstly, she must not entangle herself with the world in a vain seeking of a vain peace. One hears much today of a righteous and enduring peace. However, there is no righteous and enduring peace except the peace of Calvary. And the church of God must never permit herself to recognize any other peace. Any other peace except that of Calvary is surely nothing else than the attempt of sinful man to establish prosperity, to destroy the results of sin without confessing sin itself. And it is the calling of the church, not only to refrain from this activity of the world, but also to proclaim the judgment of God upon it and be the party of the living God and of the Prince of Peace also in this respect. Secondly, it is the calling of the church to shew forth the light of God's Word and proclaim the gospel of God in Christ. This we must do in order that out of every nation, tribe, people, and tongue the church of God may be gathered and all the people of God, according to God's sovereign will, may come to the knowledge of the truth. And in this proclamation of the gospel of God the church may well remember that it pleases the Lord to save all classes of men, so that the prayer for the salvation of those who are in authority must not be neglected, if only we remember that God saves also from among them those whom He elected before the foundation of the world. However, even so and also by means of this shewing forth of the light of God's Word, the church

will be the party of the living God over against the world. The church is surely a definite, elect people whose calling it is to be the party of the living God over against a world which lieth in darkness. This church the Lord will lead into everlasting heavenly glory. Throughout the history of this time the cause of God will be opposed by the party of darkness. This party of darkness is, naturally, the stronger from every point of view. And, hence, the church must understand that her future hope does not lie in an ultimate salvation of the world and an earthly restoration of all things. Rather, she must be the party of the living God and never fail to proclaim the judgment of God upon an unrepentant and unbelieving world. This life of the antithesis is our calling. And besides, it pleases God to save His church also through the hatred of a naturally stronger world in order that our salvation may proclaim the praise of His glory.

We must bear in mind that God cannot reveal Himself over against this wicked world except as the God of judgment. We too often forget that it is God Who wages war. Too often we view war as merely waged by men. We ought to remember that Jehovah has declared war on this world already from the beginning of time. These wars and rumors of war whereof Scripture speaks are declarations of God Himself and are inseparably connected with the coming of His kingdom. This, I say, we must ever bear in mind, if we are to be comforted also in the midst of the present world-conflict. War must be viewed in the light of God, only in the light of God. Only then will we be able to understand that it would be more terrible if the living God would permit a wicked world to live at peace.

The living God is always judging the world. And this judgment is ever a judgment of condemnation. The Lord's attitude towards the world is never an attitude of love but of wrath. This the Heidelberg Catechism would teach us in Lord's Day 4 where we read that God punishes the wicked with temporal misery and eternal punishment in hell. Temporal misery is not temporary misery, which is but for a short time, but it refers to the eternal and unchangeable wrath of God, which, because it is eternal and unchangeable, therefore also strikes the wicked in this time. What other attitude could God assume towards the wicked whom His soul hateth! For the Lord is the living God. He is a Light and in Him is no darkness at all. He is the Absolute Good, the God of infinite perfections. As such He is the God of eternal love and righteousness. The remark is heard so often nowadays that the God of love cannot permit this catastrophe to continue much longer. They who express these sentiments forget, however, that God's love is fundamentally Divine Self-love. Jehovah loves Himself as the Absolute Good. And as the God of

righteousness He eternally wills Himself and is perfectly devoted to Himself. This also explains His relation to the creature, particularly man. Loving Himself He only can love those who are like unto Himself. Hence, He loves His people, not as they are in themselves, but only as they are in Jesus Christ, our Lord. And loving His people in Christ Jesus He blesses them, seeks their eternal happiness and salvation and exercises covenant-fellowship with them. How different, however, is the Lord's attitude towards the wicked, the reprobate world. Them His soul hates every day. Life and blessedness we can experience only in fellowship with the Lord. Apart from Him is death. That the Lord alone is life and peace also the sinner who forsakes Him must experience. This he experiences in the way of misery and death. Never does the Lord stand in an attitude of love towards him. Never does he experience peace within his soul. The Lord is against him and causes all things to work together unto his eternal ruin and destruction. And also in this life misery and death is his lot. The ravages of sin are experienced daily in his body. He is filled with spiritual darkness and death. Never is it his privilege to experience the blessedness of the service of the living God. This judgment of God also reveals itself in wars and rumors of wars and other world-wide calamities. Special judgments of the Lord they are, when Jehovah causes even the world to pause, as it were, and taste the very evident outpouring of the wrath of God upon an evil world. Surely, these wars are also caused by the spirit of enmity and hatred which lurks in every human heart. But it is the living God Who, through man's wickedness, plunges this godless world into ever increasing misery and sorrow. Was not the last war the war to end all wars? In vain, however, will a wicked world which refuses to acknowledge the living God succeed in banishing wars and rumors of war. In vain will this wicked world establish an era of peace and happiness without the living God. In vain will this world liberate herself from the results of sin. In vain will she seek an end of these miseries, until at the end of time the world will be united against the cause of God and Christ here below, only to be plunged immediately thereafter into everlasting desolation.

Can the Christian derive comfort from this presentation of Scripture? Indeed he can. Surely, to pursue after a just and righteous and enduring peace is like pursuing a phantom or the end of a rainbow. What comfort can we derive from praying for and seeking a peace which cannot be? If, however, we conduct ourselves as the party of the living God, we can be comforted with the thought that these judgments are the judgments of a living God, the manifestation of the God of our salvation towards a wicked world. Let us confess our sins, humble ourselves deeply before God,

not to secure thereby an end of world hostilities, but to experience the blessedness that, in the midst of these judgments in which also the church is involved, we may taste the peace that even now God is caring for us and causing all things to work together for our salvation.

H. V.

Current Events

Peace Aims and the Post War World.

Especially of late has there been a persistent clamor for definite peace aims on the part of the Allies to prepare for the post-war world. Leading commentators and editors have been showing how that it is absolutely necessary to state the war aims and the peace aims clearly now before the war is won in order that the chaos and failure of the last armistice may not be repeated. And, of course, it is also understood that this must be the decision of the United Nations in the form of clear statements of future policy signed and agreed to by the majority.

This demand for statement of policy comes at a time when there is more sign of victory for the United Nations than ever before. This feeling of optimism is general in spite of the warnings that the end is still a long way off. Churchill called it the end of the beginning. Many others have spoken of the difficult positions which still have to be conquered. Those of us who have been too enthusiastic will better be able to judge of the position of the Allies and the nearness of victory when the truthful reports that come months and even a year after their happenings are revealed. It will also be plainer to us when the present offensives shall have developed more. At this writing and probably for some time to come it will be impossible for a layman to judge of the true progress of the war. Nevertheless there are some indications which definitely point to a marked success the united nations are having. There is the remarkable increase in production in our United States. The output of industrial Detroit it is told us, exceeds the peak production in automobile days. This change-over and tooling up for war exhibits the genius of our American engineers.

That an expression of aims is absolutely necessary cannot be denied. It not only is a foolish way to wage a war without definite aims, but the reason for waging a war at all is taken away when there is no objective and a real cause. However, it cannot be denied that there have been some aims expressed and that there has been a cause for war because of the aggressive actions of the Axis powers. Yet the real causes and

the true situation has not been made clear. The aims that have been expressed are not definite enough and do not at all cover the mighty practical problems which shall arise after the war. An Atlantic Charter has been made. But many questions and differences have been raised about it.

The problems of reconstruction will remain for generations to come. The problem of maintaining a peace that will have been established is a knotty one that so far has not been answered satisfactorily to those nations concerned.

Some of the problems of reconstruction are enumerated and explained in an article in the December *Harpers* entitled, "Hunger, Hatred, and Postwar Europe". The writer introduces his article with the following paragraph: "The many 'peace plans' and 'blue prints' for 'reconstruction' which have been issued in the past few months all, so far as I am aware, presume the existence of stable and cooperative governments of Europe. When such governments come into being the merits of these proposals will have been tested. After the war the world will have to recover from an economic and social demoralization such as it has not known since the Thirty years war, perhaps since the Dark Ages." He enumerates the realities which have to be faced. First he mentions *hunger*, which is now and shall prevail after the war. Just a little thinking will startle us with the reality of this fact. We only have to remind ourselves of the present rationing and shortages which will increase as time goes on. The next thing mentioned is the *wealth that is destroyed*. Bombs and destruction will have destroyed much of industrial Europe. Much more of the land and cattle will have been depleted than in the last war. During the last war the writer tells us it was from 25 to 50% throughout the continent. *Deterioration of machines and consumers goods* is mentioned in the third place. *Destruction of human life* is another reality. *Confusion over property, over land, demoralization of finance, what to use for money, absence of a market, conflicting social classes* are mentioned in that grim list too. Last of all he treats of *hate*. He says, "Never in history has such a volume of hate been generated as will be released on Armistice Day".

These things we feel are the stark reality and they cause us to become very sober in our outlook upon the future. The years that lie ahead will be filled by the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. However, the optimism and certainty with which some leaders speak and plan about the post war world cause us to feel that they may attain their goal. Especially do we think so when we read of the descriptions of achievements of the powers of darkness as they are pictured in the powers of the beast, which arises out of the turmoil of the waters, the nations.

The Voices of Church Leaders.

It is to be expected that the leaders of the churches will also raise their voices to speak about the post war world and about the steps to take to attain a better world. Looked at superficially the churches could be pointed at with an accusing finger and question, "What have you yourselves done for peace and harmony in the church world?" The divisions among the churches seem to deprive the churches of a right to speak to the world about reconstruction. And it seems as if that is the feeling among church leaders today in England and in America. That is how I would explain the many voices of church leaders today for church union. Especially during this war has that subject been raised. Steps also have been taken to attain more unity in America and especially in Britain. There are the following unions already: "The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America", "The National Christian Council" in India, a union of churches is in the process of being formed in Britain, a "World Council of Churches" was formed at Utrecht, Holland, just before the war as is expected to take permanent form as soon as peace returns.

In this connection I would like to point to the article of E. Stanley Jones, in the "Christian Century" of December 16. He writes about *Church Federal Union Now*. In this article E. Stanley Jones maintains that after the suffering of the war men will long for a vast world reconstruction and that the time is now for cooperation for the reconstruction. A plan to amalgamate the denominations into one church union in which the churches would lose their names, their policy, their organization, their distinctiveness, themselves, is rejected by him. "If that is the vision for church unity", he writes, "then I think we are striving for the moon." He proposes therefore a Federation. It would be a union of churches like the union of States that we have. In that federation churches would cease to be churches and become branches of one Church, "The Church of Christ in America". He proposes that there could be national branches too of one world church, "the World Assembly of the Church of Christ". As to the doctrinal basis the confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God", would be the rock upon which this church would be built. He maintains that would leave the door open to everyone who would make such a confession. It would leave the door open to the Roman Catholic, if he would submit to becoming a branch of the Church upon that confession. E. Stanley Jones believes it can be realized just as well as it was realized in our union of states in America, and that in such a Federation the Church might be the spearhead of reconstruction.

It is not so much our purpose in pointing to some

of the important events that are taking place to evaluate them at length. Much could be said about such trends in the church world for union. However, to make a comment, we would say, many of them are probably characterized by the same error and shortsightedness as is shown in this position of E. Stanley Jones. To propose to make the confession of Peter the basis of Church organization would demand that we jump back into the days of the apostles and forget about the history of the Church of Christ since that time. The Church of Christ was surely founded upon the rock, the confession of Peter, which is the epitome of the Church's confession in the entire Word of God. But the true Church of Christ has gone through a history of almost two thousand years. In that time she was guided by the Holy Spirit to affirm and confess that same confession more fully in the light of the entire Word of God. This fuller expression was occasioned by false teachers that crept into the church. Over against the heresies the Church has made clear statements of the truth of the Bible, and this confession of Peter. The error of E. Stanley Jones then is by forgetting the full expression of our confession even in the Bible, and forgetting the sins of schism and heretical church groups, to wish to start all over again from the beginning and set forth without the full armor of the truth. Such a federation would be a mighty force as to numbers and power. But it would be a babe as to the expression of the truth. It would become susceptible to every wind of false doctrine. Such a church would easily become the victim of another "beast".

Certainly we should strive for unity. That unity we have in principle—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. We must yet, however, fight against error and the flesh and powers and principalities. By faith in that oneness which we have in the truth we can seek unity, the unity of truth and not outward organization merely.

L. D.

Luther's Quest For Justification

An expression one frequently hears today is this: "Behind every news item there is a story". This undoubtedly is true. We may, however, also revise the expression somewhat and say "behind every historical event there is a story". There certainly is. Thus it is that Luther's quest for Justification is one of the stories behind that great event of church history which we call, "The Reformation".

Shall we consider this story behind The Reformation from an angle seldom considered? Usually Luth-

er's quest for Justification is treated from a purely historical viewpoint and often from an Arminian viewpoint. Shall we approach it from a spiritual viewpoint considering the spiritual story behind Luther's quest for Justification?

The first thing we should consider is this spiritual principle that the natural man hates the truth. All history and especially all church history, teaches us that he hates the truth and bears out the word of God in Rom. 1:18 that he does, "hold the truth under in unrighteousness". From the days of the early church when the Comforter, The Spirit of Truth, came and led the church into the truth until this present day the natural man has sought to hold the truth under in unrighteousness. The attempts have been many and varied. The method depended upon the particular place the natural man, who strove to repress it, occupied. We do not find the natural man merely in the out-and-out ungodly man but also in the false church and even in our hearts. The method employed to hold the truth under in unrighteousness, then, depends on whether it is the world, the false church or the old man of sin within our hearts who seeks to repress it. The world seeks to do so by persecution and oppression, striving to exterminate the church physically and thus rid the world of the truth. The false church and false teachers seek to undermine faith in that truth and thus do away with it. They come with doctrines pleasing to man, that fascinate him and appeal to his proud nature. We repress and reject the truth by running away from the means of grace.

In Luther's day it was the false church that repressed the truth by preaching the lie. It was the Roman Catholic church of his day that sought to hide the truth, and presented a corruption of the truth. With this perversion of the truth we must deal when we consider Luther's quest for Justification. For, it was because the truth of man's justification was perverted and corrupted that Luther found no peace of mind and sought to find assurance of his justification.

Let us briefly examine the teachings of the Roman Catholic church concerning man's justification. In an article of this nature we have not the space to give a detailed view of the Roman Catholic teaching of Justification. This is not necessary either. It may be simply stated that the Roman Catholic church taught that man is justified by works. He is justified by his own individual works or by those of others, together with his works, or entirely separate from them. The Roman Catholic doctrine of Indulgences makes it plain that it is their teaching that man is justified by his own works. These Indulgences were written declarations of the priest that man's sins were forgiven him, that he is justified before God, righteous in His sight and therefore delivered from the penalties of sin. Lest I be accused of presenting these indulgences in a wrong

light let me quote literally some of the things these indulgences guaranteed. They guaranteed: (1) "liberation from all excesses, crimes, sins that thou mayest have committed, however great and enormous they may be, or from whatever cause; (2) a remission of penalties which would have been endured in purgatory. (3) If thou shouldst not die before long years, this grace will remain unalterable until thy last hour shall arrive". In 1476, seven years before Luther's birth, these indulgences were also made available for souls in purgatory. These declarations of the priest could be attained for a sum of money, by undergoing hardships and pains prescribed by the priest or even by entering in upon a monastic life. One special way to acquire an indulgence, which Luther himself undertook during his quest for Justification, was to descend on one's knees—the so-called staircase of Pilate. Does not this practice and this doctrine teach that a man is justified by his works? That these indulgences could be acquired for those in purgatory also reveals that the individual is justified by the works of *other men*. There is another Roman Catholic doctrine which proves that they teach justification by the works of others. I have in mind the doctrine of Mariolatry. According to this doctrine we may pray to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who will intercede for us and for her sake, Christ will forgive our sins. We are, thus, also justified by the work of Mary. To be sure, the Roman Catholic Church will deny all this and say we are saved only by the blood of Christ. But, then, why teach these and other things as necessary besides that blood and as helps to be justified by His blood? This is nothing but a perversion of the truth and a manifest hatred for it. This perversion of the truth Luther found in his day.

To understand Luther's quest for Justification we must also consider another spiritual reality generally overlooked in our church history books. The reality is this, that even as the natural man hated the truth and seeks to pervert and repress it, the regenerated child of God loves the truth, seeks it and cannot feel satisfied until he has found it. He has the life of Christ in him. This causes him to long for Christ. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness; as the hart panteth after water brooks, his soul pants after God. He declares with David, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in His house all the days of my life". Therefore is he especially eager to know the truth concerning his justification. His sins rise up against him. He knows, he feels and he believes that he has no right to dwell in God's house, but he is also so eager to be with Him.

When you come to this regenerated child of God with the lie, it leaves him cold, dissatisfied and troubled. This must be the case for the lie leads away from God. If you come to this man and tell him he is

justified by his works, he will not find peace. He will only feel more keenly his unworthiness and feel farther from God's house. You can deceive the unregenerated by the lie and make them believe that their works are sufficient, but the new man in Christ will be satisfied only when you come to him with Christ, and not a Christ of your own invention but with the Christ of the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He is the way, the truth and the life. You must come with Him and justification through His blood alone. He is the way and another way there is not. The way of the cross leads home. Through His work on that cross we are justified. Thus a man is not justified by works but by faith in Him. Not so now that this faith is our work, but it is God's gift to us and His means whereby He imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Christ. Come with this truth to the regenerated child of God, and he will find peace. Of course he will, for Jesus said, "The truth shall make you free", and this is the truth of Scripture. Since we are justified by faith, the contents of that faith must be the truth, and this is the truth of Scripture that Christ died for our sins and by His blood we are justified through faith. Eph. 2:8, 9; Rom. 5:9; Rom. 3:26, 28; Acts 13:39; Gal. 2:16.

Thus it was that Luther could find no peace with God. He, being a regenerated child of God, and thus eager to dwell in His house, sought for it carefully and earnestly. He practiced what Rome prescribed. No one can say that he found fault with the Roman Catholic teachings without giving them a fair trial. He sought and strove, trying this and trying that. But not until he found the truth in God's Word, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast," (Eph. 2:8, 9), that he found peace. He found Christ, the way and the truth, and by faith was assured that in God's sight he is righteous.

The point that I wish to make in this article is this, that Luther's quest for Justification was not a quarrel with the Roman Catholic clergy whose corruption he saw. It was not a desire for mere intellectual enlightenment. Nay, it was the new life of Christ in him that caused him to hunger and thirst after righteousness that drove him in his quest for justification. His quest for justification was not first of all a quest for the doctrinal truth of justification. To be sure, he sought this. He had to seek this, as we tried to make plain, for only the truth can make us free. But the story behind this all is this, that in Luther seeking justification we have a true child of God breathing and panting after his God. In him we see the work of the Spirit. Luther had no quarrel with the church or with anyone else. He was seeking peace with God. But Luther was no exceptional man. Rather is this the case that God gave Luther an exceptional measure of His grace. We marvel at David's spiritual life

when he expressed his desire to dwell in God's house all the days of his life, but we must not forget that it is this same spiritual life in Luther that drove him to seek justification and peace with God. In David, Luther and every child of God the life of Christ is implanted and this drives him to seek peace with God. This explains David's one desire, Luther's quest for justification and our hungering and thirsting after righteousness. By nature Luther also hated the truth and sought to repress it. It is the new life in him that drove him to seek the truth in order to find peace with God. Of course, there is more that can be said of this quest. One thing, however, should still be said to complete the picture. Luther's quest for Justification must also be explained in the light of God's providence. God filled him with such a great measure of spiritual life and gave him such a great measure of grace to seek for the truth in the midst of darkness, that we today might have the truth and might have peace with Him. But again we should note how God works in His providence. He does not force Luther to seek and maintain the truth. He uses him as a rational willing creature whose mind and heart are renewed.

J. A. H.

Let's Preserve Balance

Editor of The Standard Bearer,

Dear Mr. Editor:

Will you please allow me some space in our Standard Bearer again to comment on the contributions concerning the C. L. A.?

I am convinced that the C. L. A. is not being fairly judged by too many among us. Because it promotes also the material interests of the laborer it is condemned as an organization that is interested only in the things of this world. Rev. Hanko has given extensive quotations from C. L. A. literature to try to prove that point. Personally I cannot see anything unchristian even in what he quoted, not if properly interpreted. The Rev. Hanko stated in his last article that especially the statement which he underscored, "It (the C. L. A.) is opposed to, *and ready to fight oppression by employers and their agents*" expresses an entirely different sentiment than that of the Christian who is not interested, first of all, in his material welfare, but in the will of God, whom he seeks to serve with all his heart and soul and strength. That is beyond me. I was always of the opinion that a full orbed Christian life meant that we must fight whenever we meet it. Surely oppression of workers by employers or their agents is also sin. Would Rev.

Hanko really contend that to fight such sin, not with violence but through peaceful organization efforts, is contrary to the Christian life?

This quotation from a recent piece of propaganda literature of the C.L.A. is much more biblical, I believe:

"Basic to a proper understanding of Biblical principles of Social justice and their application is recognition of the fact that SIN is the cause of all the discord, strife and injustices in the relationships between employers and employees. The C. L. A. is pledged to fight this sin in order to establish proper, just relationships. It rejects the theory of the necessity of the class-struggle, because it conflicts with the Scriptural demands for love among men all created after the image of God, denies the Biblical conception of the organic unity of the human race, and is utterly materialistic. Christian principles demand that there be cooperation between individuals and various groups in society, respect for one another's rights, promotion of each other's and the general welfare, and recognition of divinely instituted authority. Application of these principles will bring social reform."

"The C. L. A. organizes workers in trade and industrial unions for the purpose of propagating these principles and applying them through practical measures: for the elimination of injustices and the establishment and maintaining of righteousness. Because of the independence of workers and their responsibilities toward one another the C. L. A. believes that all workers should be organized, but contends also that those who confess Christian principles of life must establish their own independent unions, in order that they may collectively make the application of those principles effective."

"The C. L. A. also takes the position that Christian workers should not be members of labor or other social organization which in their principles or practices violate Christian principles of life and do not recognize Scriptural precepts as the infallible rule for all of life, including organization activity. It holds that all workers who join such organizations thereby become responsible for what such organizations do, and guilty before God of the violations of Biblical precepts in which such organizations may engage."

That, Mr. Editor, expresses a healthy Christian view. It is militant, well-balanced Christianity. I cannot escape the impression that Rev. Hanko and others are unbalanced in their views. Mr. Gritters in his article showed very clearly that for a Christian to be interested in the advancement of material interests, so long as these interests are not primary, is not wrong, necessary in fact. But Rev. Hanko comes back with the same old argument about the sinfulness of seeking material things as an end in themselves. Who has ever contended that that is right? I can assure

you that the C. L. A. and those who give leadership to it are not first of all fighting for the cause because of material interests. I know better. If material things were first they would have given up long ago. They know that through other unions much more could be done, materially. No, they are fighting, against tremendous odds, for the right of Christian workers to work under just labor conditions, at their chosen trade, without membership in an ungodly union such as the C. I. O. and A. F. of L. They are spending large sums of money time and again, with no hope of financial return, simply to protect a few Christian men from those unions. And what are most of us doing to help? Sitting on the sidelines and criticizing!

One of the chief objections still seems to be that the C. L. A. in principle accepts the right of the Christian to strike. In doing so it very strictly circumscribed the conditions under which a strike might be called as a last resort. The conditions complained of must have been put forth to come to a peaceful settlement, including the offer to the employer to submit the dispute to arbitration. Then, finally, after an unjust employer has refused to meet just demands, spite of his ability to meet them, and has refused to submit the dispute to arbitration, the employees have the right to refuse to continue to work, to strike, so says the C. L. A. And then it goes on to say that in the strike no violence of any kind may be used. It must be a peaceful strike, entirely within the law.

Now anyone would say, it seems to me, that is a very conservative and Christian position. But no, some among us still find fault with it. It is still force they say. Rev. Petter has already shown that that is debatable and that it is very difficult to state whether certain actions can be called force and whether or not it is proper to use it at certain times. I simply do not believe that there is anything unchristian in the calling of a strike under such conditions as set forth by the C. L. A.

It is of course more or less a dead issue anyway, as has been said before. The C. L. A. will perhaps never call one. Arbitration is the order of the day. The C. L. A. already before the government acted stated that strikes during the war were not to be tolerated under any conditions, and that all disputes should be settled by government appointed arbitration boards. We now have the War Labor Board for that purpose. And very likely after the war that Board will continue to function under a different name. The C. L. A. will not allow any strike if there is an arbitration board, appointed by the government, with final authority to settle disputes.

But appeal to such a board would undoubtedly also be wrong, according to the views of Rev. Hanko and others. Suppose that the C. L. A. were in a dispute with an unreasonable, unjust employer, who could

afford to pay fair wages, but refused to do so. Finally the C. L. A. would appeal to the War Labor or some such body. That Board would look into the matter and order the employer to comply with the C. L. A. demands. That would be wrong too, I suppose. Why? Because that Board would have been used by the C. L. A. to gain the just demands which it otherwise could not gain. That Board would then be coercive means in the hands of the organization to gain its ends. And Rev. Hanko has said that a Christian may never use coercive means to gain his ends.

Now some may say that I'm carrying that too far. Perhaps. But no further than Rev. Hanko, Mr. Ten Elshof and others have carried it. This is what I want to bring out: that those men are emphasizing a truth to the extreme where they are losing proper balance. Basic to their arguments is this idea: that the Christian must be satisfied with whatever position he is placed in because that is the will of God. I challenge that. We cannot so easily determine what is the will of God. I do not believe that it is the will of God that men should work for wages that are not adequate to give their families proper care, to educate their children in the Christian School, to contribute to Kingdom causes, and, that he must be satisfied with that even though he knows that the employer is well able to pay adequate wages, etc. I do not believe that when a Christian fights against social injustices, against sin, he is then in revolt against the will of God. Witnessing, of which Rev. Hanko likes to speak, means more than talking: it also means taking action against sin, to remove it!

This is the danger that is threatening us: that we become passive entirely, that we simply sit down and say that things as they are going are going according to the will of God and that we may do nothing to try to change it, lest we fight against God. That is an unbalanced and dangerous position. Let us rather take this position: that whatever is sinful is contrary to the will of God, and that therefore we must oppose it with all that is in us. That is more Biblical I'm sure. When we take that position we will be more militant than we are today. Then we will not merely take negative action, against unchristian unions, but we will not stop there: we will then also take positive action to apply the principles which we confess. And then we'll all be C. L. A. supporters.

Once more, Mr. Editor, let's be on our guard against unbalanced views. Even Rev. Petter, whose article I appreciated, is inclined toward extremism when he claims that the bread question is only incidental. I wonder whether that is the right word. We agree, of course, that the spiritual interests come first. But, the procuring of our daily bread is more than incidental to it. It is God's will that His people shall have a sufficient amount of it. The patriarchs of old

were men with large possessions, given to them by God. He gave to Israel of old a land flowing with milk and honey and gave laws to protect the poor against want. The whole creation, now lying in sin, is God's. His people are called upon to be instruments in His hand to render the glory of it again unto Him. The real test of the Christian is this: to be spiritually minded, to place first things first, while enjoying a sufficiency of the material things. The bread question is more than incidental in the plan of God. The danger of falling into worship of the material is there, I grant. But, that danger must not cause us to fall into the extreme position of saying that to seek the advancement of material interests is wrong. That is not Scriptural.

B. V.

Ingezonden

Eerwaarde Redacteur:

In de Standard Bearer van December 1 las ik een ingezonden stuk onder het opschrift "Gedachten Over De C. L. A." van de hand van Mr. A. Hirdes. En in de December 15 uitgave zag ik dat een broeder zijn stem verheft tegen bovengenoemd stuk, hetwelk ik heel goed kan verstaan daar ik van hetzelfde gevoelen ben, hoewel ik het misschien een weinig anders had gezegd.

Ook ik was niet weinig teleurgesteld bij het lezen van Broeder Hirdes artikel. In de eerste plaats schijnt het mij toe dat Broeder Hirdes niets afweet waar de C. L. A. eigenlijk voor staat.

Het is ook niet mijn plaats om op al de punten in te gaan die de broeder er bij sleept. Alleen wil ik opmerken dat hij de C. L. A. zoo maar even op de zelfde lijn plaatst met al de andere anti-Christelijke organisaties die hun ontstaan hebben in de afgrond, en daarom werken zijn des duivels, een Christen onwaardig lid van te zijn.

Broeder Hirdes schrijft dat de C. L. A. zich de letter C onrechtmatig toeigent, m.a.w., ze is niet Christelijk, dus onchristelijk (neutraal bestaat niet). Het schijnt met Broeder Hirdes te wezen als met velen en dan bedoel ik in 't bijzonder velen onder ons volk, die zich schijnbaar blind staren op een artikel in de Constitution der C.L.A. handelende over strikes als uiterste middel tot het verkrijgen van billijk recht, alsof dat het hoofddoel der C. L. A. was. Ik denk dat Broeder Hirdes niet kan wijzen op voorvallen van strikes en picket-lines in de historie der C. L. A.

Verder zegt de broeder ook dat we wel persoonlijk naar lotsverbetering mogen streven, maar we mogen

dat niet doen als een georganiseerde groep. Waar de broeder dat vandaan heeft weet ik niet, maar als het zoo staat dat we als Christen alle onrecht maar stilzwijgend moeten dragen, mogen we het dan als personen wel ontloopen?

Wat de broeder bedoelt met de letters C. L. A. weet ik niet maar ik vermoed niet een heel aardige naam.

Verder doet Broeder Hirdes de C. L. A. met de andere goddelooze unions zoo maar uitkomen bij Lucifer, de eerste union organizer, en kan ook de C. L. A. niets anders verwachten dan Gods eeuwige toorn.

Ik wenschte wel dat Broeder Hirdes zijn stuk in de pen had gehouden, en inplaats van zijn gedachten publiek te maken eens een beetje inlichtingen had gezocht bij zulken die meer ervaring hebben in fabrieksarbeid dan hijzelf. Ook ben ik blijde dat niet al onze menschen er zoo over denken als Broeder Hirdes. Doch genoeg over het stuk alszoodanig, hoewel er wel meer van kan worden gezegd.

Ik denk het zou heel wat beter zijn, wanneer onze Christen arbeiders zich aansloten bij de C.L.A. en help degenen die staan voor een rechte verhouding tusschen werkgever en werkman, en dit trachten te bewerken in een weg gegrond op Gods Woord.

En wanneer het onze overtuiging is dat er dingen zijn in de C. L. A. die niet goed zijn, zou het dan niet beter wezen te trachten het te verbeteren, door onze invloed daar te geven, inplaats van zoo maar even uit te spreken dat het alles uit den boeze is? Afbreken en veroordeelen gaat nog al gemakkelijk maar iets beters in de plaats geven is een ander ding.

Onze Christelijke scholen zijn ook niet zoo wij ze gaarne willen hebben, maar nochtans werken we samen. Wij zijn het niet eens met de leer der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk, maar we willen toch wel dat onze jongens in de Army Camps in aanraking komen met hun die door genoemde kerk worden uitgezonden. Waarom zouden we niet als Christen arbeiders zamen kunnen werken, en getuigen tegen onrecht, zoowel van werkgevers als ook van andere radicale unions?

Ik denk in een tijd als heden hebben we elkander noodig en laat ons toch niet afbreken, maar indien mogelijk opbouwen. We moeten ook het beste zoeken voor de broeder, we moeten ook voorzichtig zijn en niet het goede kwaad noemen, en het kwade goed.

Ik denk wel eens waarom sluiten niet meer onzer mannen zich aan bij de C. L. A. Van andere kerken kunnen ze het ook niet meer verwachten daar die geen beslist standpunt innemen tegenover de unions. Bij ons is het nog van tweeën een. Ik vrees dat velen zich niet willen aansluiten, juist omdat de C. L. A. staat voor *Christelijke* beginselen, en zoo denkt men, dan

kunnen ze toch niets doen, en is er ook geen voordeel bij te halen; bewijs dat materieel voordeel niet het eerste en het zwaarste weeg bij de C. L. A., maar in de eerste plaats getuigen en het recht voorstaan.

Wanneer gelijk heden ten dage schier alles zich beweegt in de richting van vereeniging, en dan in ongehoof, is het dan niet noodig dat Christenen zich ook te namen scharen en elkander tot steun zijn, of is dat alles beslist uit ongehoof? Ik verschil in dezen beslist met Broeder Hirdes.

Nog eens ik raad Broeder Hirdes aan om eens wat meer inlichtingen te vragen bij hen die hem dat kunnen geven, en verder nog eens raad ik onze Christen mannen aan sluit u aan bij de C. L. A. en laat ons zamen bouwen en niet afbreken, en ten slotte zou het veel helpen als onze leiders eens wat konden helpen, indien er iets is wat in de weg staat, tracht het te veranderen, maar een ding is zeker, velen hebben in dezen leiding noodig en andere leiding dan genoemd stuk van Broeder Hirdes.

H. D. J.

IN MEMORIAM

On December 17, 1942, our beloved parents,

MR. PETER M. HOEKSTRA

and

MRS. P. M. HOEKSTRA — De Boer

commemorated their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

We, their children, extend our sincere and loving congratulations. We thank our God for sparing them for each other and for us, and pray that the Lord may continue to be with them in grace and loving kindness.

Their grateful children:

Martin
Eunice
George
Donald
Theodore
Bernice
Florence
John
Peter Jr.
Dorothy
Henry

Hull, Iowa.